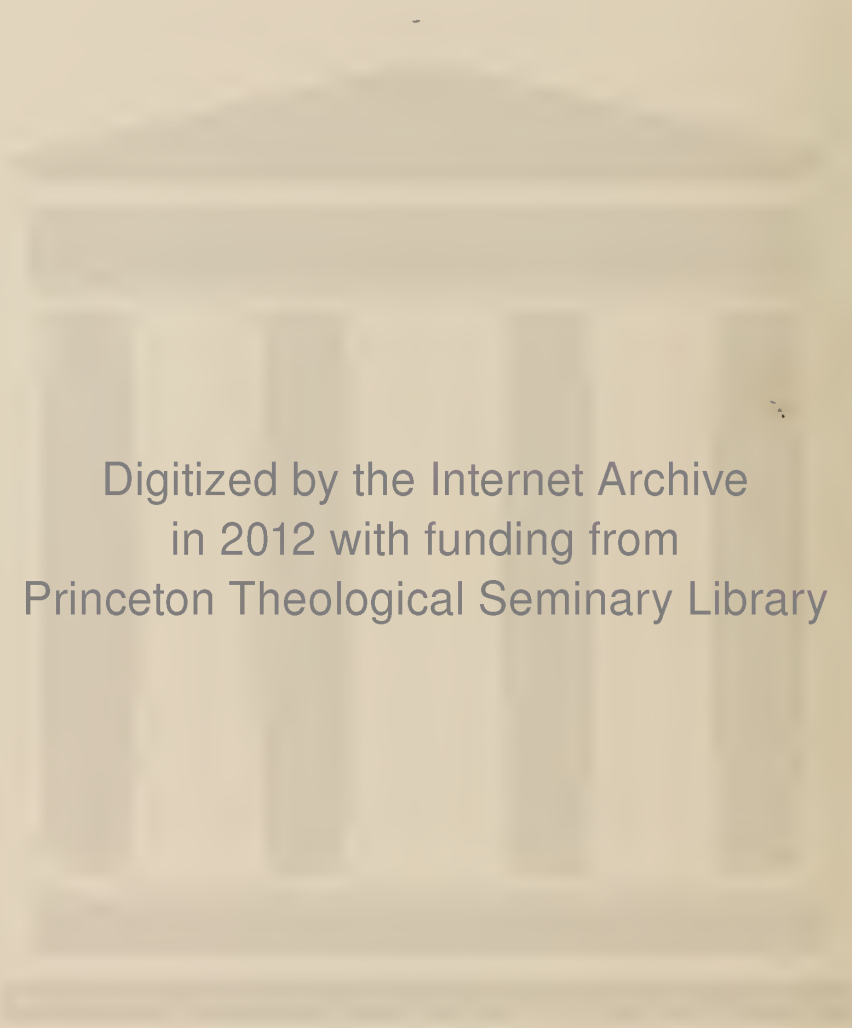
Thomas Brown,

Dalkeith.

SCS #1406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# THE PRINCIPALL ACTS OF THE GENERALL ASSEMBLY, CONVEENED AT EDINBURGH,

Upon the first VVEDNESDAY of AUGUST, the 4. of that Moneth, in the year 1647.

EDINBURGH,
*Printed by* EVAN TYLER, *Pinter to the Kings most Excellent Majestie.*

Anno Dom. 1647.

# THE GENERALL ASSEMBLY, At EDINBURGH, 4. *August.* 1647.

## *August* 16. 1647. *Postmeridiem.* Sess. II.

### *Act allowing the half of the Ministers in the Presbyterie of* Zetland *only, with their Ruling Elders, to keep the Provinciall Assembly.*

THe Generall Assembly, Understanding that the whole Members of the Presbyterie of *Zetland*, adjoyned to the Provinciall of *Caithnes* and *Sutherland* upon weighty considerations by the preceeding Assembly, cannot be present at the meetings of that Provinciall, without great prejudice to the particular Congregations within that Presbyterie, and many other inconveniences; That Isle being of great distance from Land, and the passage from and to the same being uncertaine and dangerous: Doe therefore Declare and Ordaine, That the whole Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterie of *Zetland*, shall not be tyed hereafter to come to the meetings of their said Provinciall; But that the half of the number of the Ministers with their Ruling Elders, shall be onely oblieged to keep the meetings of the said Provinciall Assembly in time coming.

## 20. *August* 1647. *Antemeridiem.* Sess. XV.

## *A Declaration, and Brotherly Exhortation of the Generall Assembly of the Church of* Scotland, *to their Brethren of* England,

THe conscience of our dutie to God obliging us to give a testimony to his Trueth, and to the Kingdom of his Sonne Jesus Christ, now so much resisted and opposed by many, and so little owned by others: The laudable custome and example of correspondency between Neighbouring Churches, exhorting, encouraging, and (in case of publike scandall) admonishing in love one another, as well as single Brethren ought to admonish one another in love, in the case of private offence: Our nearer relation and more speciall affection to our Brethren of *England*, making us to sympathize with them in their danger and affliction as our own, both Kingdomes being united as one entire Body in one Covenant, for pursuing the common cause and ends therein expressed: Yea, common reason and experience it self teaching us that wee have no cause to conceive our Religion, the liberties of this Church, or our selves to be in a condition of safety, when ever the enemies of our Religion and Liberties are growing to a prevalency in the Neighbour Kingdom. Any one of these considerations, much more all of them together, cry aloud upon us to break our silence in this present Juncture of Affaires; yet wee hope to expresse our selves both concerning the present Dangers and present Duties, as in a conscionable and Brotherly freedome, so in a fair and inoffensive way; for wee have no pleasure nor purpose to provoke any Person or Party whatsoever, nor to encrease, but to endeavour the allaying and composing of the present unhappy differences. If any shall offend at our discharging our conscience and doing our duty, yet wee shall rather choose to take our hazard of that, then of displeasing God by neglect of duty. But we hope better things, then to be mis-understood, or mis-interpreted by such as desire a candide interpretation of their owne actions or expressions.

First of all, whatsoever the present discouragements, difficulties or dangers are, or whatsoever for the future they may bee, we cannot but commemorate to the glory of God, and we doubt not it shall be remembred to his glory in the Church throughout all ages, How great a salvation his Mighty Hand and Outstretched

Arme

Arme hath wrought for these three Kingdomes; How he stirred up the Spirits of his People in this Kingdome ten yeares agoe, to begin to shake off the Yoke of Prelaticall tyrannie, and of Popish Ceremonies obtruded upou us, contrary to the Lawes of God and Men; How he led us on from so small beginnings, and from one degree to another, till wee were United in a Nationall Covenant; How he gave us a Banner to bee displayed for the Truth, and so blessed us in the prosecution of that Covenant, that the Kings Majesty was graciously pleased upon the humble Petitions of his Loyall Subjects in this Nation, to indict a Generall Assembly and Parliament for healing the grievances of Church and State respectively, As likewise to grant his Royall consent for Confirming and Ratifying by Acts of Parliament our Nationall Covenant, and the Government and Liberties of this Church. After which the new Troubles raised against us by the malice and treachery of our enemies, did occasion the first expedition of this Nation into *England*, (upon which followed the calling of the Parliament there, and the large Treaty) and in the issue, the return of that Army was with an Olive branch of Peace, and not without the beginnings of a Reformation in *England*: In which work while the Parliament was interrupted and oppposed, and a bloody War begun with great successe on that side which opposed the Parliament and the begun Reformation, from whence also did accrew great advantage to the Popish Party (whereof the Cessation of Arms concluded in *Ireland* may be in stead of many testimonies;) Commissioners were sent hither from both Houses, earnestly inviting and perswading to a nearer Union of the Kingdomes, and desiring Assistance from this Nation to their Brethren in that their great distresse; And this by the good Hand of God produced the Solemne League and Covenant of the three Kingdomes, to the terrour of the Popish and Prelaticall party our common Enemies, and to the great comfort of such as were wishing and waiting for the Reformation of Religion, and the recovery of just Liberties. And although for the conjunction of the Kingdomes in Covenant, and Armes (being a speciall means tending to the extirpation of Popery, and strengthening the true Reformed Religion) this Kingdome hath been invaded and infested by the bloody *Irish* Rebels, aided and strengthened by some degenerate and perfidious Countrey-men of our owne: Although also in *England* there were not wanting incendiaries, who hating and envying nothing more then the Union of the Kingdomes in such a Covenant, were very vigilant to catch, and active to improve all occasions of making divisive motions, and creating Nationall Differences; Yet God hath been graciously pleased to break our Enemies strength at Home when it was greatest, and to guide us through these Jealousies and Differences fomented by disaffected Persons be-

tween the Kingdomes; So that in stead of a splitting upon these Rocks (the thing hoped for by our Enemies) there was a peaceable and friendly parting: Since which time God hath further blessed our Army at Home, to the expelling of the Enemie out of our own Borders. Nor can we passe in silence the happy progresse which hath been made in the Reformation of the Church of *England*; He that hath brought the Children to the birth, can also give strength to come forth; And hee whose hand did cast out Prelacie and the Book of Common Prayer (although strongly rooted in standing Lawes;) and who enclined the Parliament of *England* to Owne no other Church Government but the Presbyteriall, (Though it bee not yet fully settled according to the Word of God, and the example of the best Reformed Churches) can as easily encline when hee thinks good both the King and them, and the body of that Kingdome to a thorow and perfect Reformation. He that made the Assemblies and Parliaments of both Kingdomes to agree upon one Directory for the Publike Worship of God, can also when he will make an agreement in the other Parts of Uniformitie, Confession of Faith, form of Church Government, and Catechisme; In all which there hath beene also a good progresse made in the Reverend and Learned Assemblie of Divines through the good hand of God so long upon them.

Having now seen so much of God both in the beginning and progresse of this his great Work; And his Hand having done so wondrous things for his People in their greatest extremities of danger, and having discovered and defeate the plots of Enemies, making them fall even by their own Counsels; These things wee resolve to keep still fixed in our hearts, and as memorials before our eyes, that remembring the Works of the Lord, and the Years of the Right Hand of the most High, wee may neither want matter of Praises and Thanksgivings, nor experience to breed hope. Although the building of the House of the Lord in *England* be not yet, after so long expectation, finished, and now also the Work ceaseth; Yet wee doe from our hearts blesse the Lord for the laying of the Foundation, and for so much progresse as hath been made in the Work; Having still confidence in the Almighty, to whom nothing is impossible or too hard, that every Mountaine which doeth or shall stand in the way shall become a plaine, and that the Head-Stone shall bee brought forth with shoutings of Joy, *Grace, Grace unto it.*

Nevertheless, we are also very sensible of the great and imminent dangers into which this Common Cause of Religion is now brought by the growing and spreading of most dangerous errours in *England*, to the obstructing and hindering of the begun Reformation, as namely (beside many others) Socinianisme, Arminianisme

nianisme, Anabaptisme, Antinomianisme, Brownisme, Erastianisme, Independency, and that which is called (by abuse of the word) Liberty of Conscience, being indeed Liberty of Errour, Scandall, Schisme, Heresie, dishonouring God, opposing the Truth, hindering Reformation, and seducing others; Whereunto we adde those Nullifidians, or men of no Religion, commonly called Seekers: Yea, wee cannot but look upon the Dangers of the true Reformed Religion in this Island, as greater now then before; Not onely for that those very principles and fundamentals of Faith which under Prelacy, yea, under Popery it self, were generally received as uncontroverted, are now by the Scepticisme of many Sectaries of this time either oppugned, or called in question; But also, because in stead of carrying on the Reformation towards perfection, that which hath beene already built is in part cast down, and in danger to be wholly overthrowne through the endeavours of Sectaries to comply with many of the Prelaticall and Malignant, and even the Popish party; and their joyning hand in hand, and casting in their lots, and interweaving their interests together in way of Combination, against the Covenant and Presbyteriall Government; Yea, the unclean spirit which was cast out, is about to enter againe with seven other spirits worse then himselfe, and so the latter end like to be worse then the beginning.

We are extremely sorry that we have cause to aggravate these evils from the crying sin of breach of Covenant; Whereof if we should hold our peace, yet according to the Word of the Lord, other Nations will say, and many among them do say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this People? and what meaneth the heat of this great anger? And they answer one another, *Because they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord their God.* We would not be understood as if we meant either to Justifie this Nation, or to charge such a sin upon all in that Nation. We know the Covenant hath been in divers particulars broken by many in both Kingdomes, the Lord pardon it, and accept a Sacrifice; And wee doe not doubt but there are many seven thousands in *England* who have not onely kept themselves unspotted, and retained their integrity in that businesse, but doe also mourne and groane before the Lord for that sin of others. Yet we should but deny our own sence and betray the Truth, if we should not resent so great a sinne and danger, as is the breach of a Solemne Covenant, sworn with hands lifted up to the most High God: Which breach however varnished over with some colourable and handsome pretexts, one whereof is the Liberty and Common Right of the free People of *England*, as once *Saul* brake a Covenant with the Gibeonites, *In his Zeal to the Children of Israel and Judah:* Yet God could not then, and cannot now be mocked; Yea, it is

too

too apparent and undeniable, that among those who did take the Covenant of the three Kingdomes, as there are many who have given themselves to a detestable indifferency or neutralitie, so there is a Generation which hath made defection to the contrary Part; Persecuting as far as they could that true Reformed Religion, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government, which by the Covenant they ought to preserve against the common Enemies; hindering and resisting that Reformation and Uniformity, which by the Covenant ought to bee endeavoured; preserving and tolerating those cursed things which by the Covenant ought to be extirpate; especially Heresie and Schisme, encroaching upon, yea offering violence unto the Rights, Priviledges, and Authority of Magistracie; Protecting and assisting such as by the Covenant ought to have been brought to condigne triall and punishment, and persecuting those who by the Covenant ought to be assisted and defended; Endeavouring also a breach in stead of a firme Peace and Union between the Kingdomes: So that there is not any one Article of the Solemne League and Covenant which hath not been sinfully and dangerously violated before God, Angels, and Men. Now if a Covenant for the Preservation and Reformation of Religion, the Maintenance and Defence of Liberties was justly thought a *fit and excellent means*, not only to *strengthen and fortifie* the Kingdomes against the common Enemie of the true Reformed Religion, publike Peace and Prosperity; But also, *to acquire the favour of Almightie GOD towards the three Kingdomes, of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, as is expressed in the Ordinance of the Lords and Commons for the taking of the Covenant, dated *Febrnary* 2. 1643. Surely then the Authors and chief Instruments of the breach of that Covenant, are to be looked upon as those who strengthen the hands of the common Enemie, and provoke the wrath of Almighty God against these Kingdomes. Yea, if this Covenant was *the Soveraigne and onely meanes of the recovery* of these embroiled bleeding Kingdoms, as is expressed in the exhortation of the Assembly of Divines to the taking of the Covenant, approved and ordered to be Printed by the House of Commons; The despising, refusing, and casting aside of that remedy, must needs render the disease much more desperate. And if by the Declaration of both Kingdomes joyned in Arms, *Anno* 1643. such as would not take the Covenant, were declared *to bee publike Enemies to their Religion and Countrey, and that they are to be censured and punished as professed Adversaries and Malignants.* Who seeth not now a strange falling away from these first Principles and Professions, among these who either magnifie and cry up, or at least connive at and comply with such as have not taken the Covenant, yea, are known Enemies to it, and cry down such as are most zealous for it?

In

In this case, while in the Neighbour Kingdom, the staves of Beauty and Bands, Covenant and Brother-hood are broken by many, the horne of Malignants and Sectaries exalted, the best affected born down, Reformation ebbing, Heresie and Schisme flowing; It can hardly bee mavelled at by any Person of prudence and discretion, if we be full of such feares and apprehensions as use to be in those who dwell near a House set on fire, or a Family infected, especially being taught by the sad experience of the Prelaticall times, how easily a Gangrene in the one half of this Island may spread through the whole; Knowing also the inveterate and insatiable malice of the Enemies of this Cause and Covenant against this Church and Kingdome; which we cannot be ignorant of, unlesse we would shut our eyes and stop our ears.

Our present purpose leadeth us to touch somewhat of the proceedings of the Army in *England* this Summer, so far as Religion is therein concerned; As wee are confident, divers have gone along with them in the simplicity of their hearts, and we presume not to judge the thoughts and intentions of any, it being Gods owne prerogative, to bring to light the hidden things of darknes, and to make manifest the counsels of the hearts; So it cannot be denied, that upon these passages and proceedings hath followed the interrupting of the so much longed for Reformation of Religion, of the setling of Presbyteriall government, and of the suppressing of heresies and dangerous errors, (which works the Parliament had taken in hand) the retarding and delaying the relief of *Ireland*, the sowing of the seeds of another War in *England*, the strengthning of the hands of the Malignant and Episcopall party, the weakning and wounding both of Magistracy and Ministery: In all which, whether the Army bee blamelesse and innocent, from ministring occasion to so great evils, or whether there be not cause for them to repent and do the first works, and to practise more of that love, moderation, and meeknesse of Spirit, and of that zeal against Malignants and Prelaticall persons, which they have from the beginning professed, and the want whereof (when suspected in others) they did so much censure; or whether there be such a thing among them, as adjoyning with those against whom, and against those with whom the Covenant was taken; We leave them in all these to the search and examination of their own consciences, that they may stand or fall unto God. For our part, we cannot conceive how the late Propoſals of that Army for setling of a Peace, do in point of Religion consist with the solemn League and Covenant, or with the Propositions of Peace, formerly agreed upon by both Kingdomes; there being so considerable omissions of divers materiall desires contained in those former Propositions, concerning the abolition of Prelacy; concerning the injoyning of the taking of the Co.

venant by all his Majesties Subjects, under such penalties as the Parliaments should agree upon; concerning the setling of Religion in *England* and *Ireland*, according to the Covenant, in such manner as both Houses of Parliament shall agree on, after advice had with the Assembly of Divines; concerning the setling of uniformity between the Churches of God in both Kingdomes, according to the Covenant, in such manner as shall be agreed on by both Houses of the Parliament of *England*, and by the Church, and Kingdome of *Scotland*, after advice had with the Divines of both Kingdomes; Also concerning an Act of Parliament to confirm the calling and sitting of the Assembly of Divines: All which, with some other particulars concerning Religion, expressed in the former Propositions, if they should now be omitted in the setling of a Peace, the progresse already made, not only in the Assembly of Divines, but in the Houses of Parliament in setling Presbyteriall Government, with the Confession of Faith, yea the Directory of publike Worship (though agreed upon by the Assemblies and Parliaments of both Kingdomes) shall bee but so much lost labour. But beside these omissions it may bee justly doubted whether there be not in these Propos als of the Army, somewhat for Episcopacy, and against the Covenant; For wee cannot understand the eleventh Propos all, in any other sense, but that it suppoſeth the continuance of the Ecclesiasticall office of Bishops or Prelats, as well as of any other Church Officers, and taketh no more from the Prelats, but coercive power or jurisdiction extending to civill penalties, which indeed belongeth to no Ecclesiasticall Officers. In the twelfth Propos all, we do not see, how it can avoid or shun the toleration of Popery, Superstition, Heresie, Schisme, Profanneſſe, or whatsoever works of darkneſſe shall be practised by such as despise the publike Worship of God in the Church, and have the most unlawfull and wicked meetings elsewhere under a profession of Religious duties, exercises or ordinances. From the thirteenth Propos all, wee can make no other result, but that in stead of enjoyning the taking of the Covenant, under such penalties as the Parliaments in their wisdome shall agree upon, the former ordinance of Parliament enjoyning the taking of it, is desired to be repealed: and then what may bee the danger of those that have taken, or shall take an oath of that kinde, not enjoyned nor ratified by authority, wee leave it to bee judged by those who know best the Lawes of that Kingdome.

One thing more wee cannot passe, that whereas in the Armies Declaration, or Representation to the Parliament, dated June 14. 1647. they mention their Brethren of *Scotland*, as having proceeded in the vindication and defence of their just rights and liberties, much higher then that Army hath done; Wee are neces-

sitated

situated to say this much for clearing of these proceedings in this Nation reflected upon: They of this Church and Kingdom who joyned together and associated themselves in this Cause, first by humble Petitions, and afterwards by Covenant, were so far from slighting or breaking that Covenant which was taken, that it was the special visible character by which the friends of the Cause were distinguished from the enemies thereof; and they were so far either from crying down the Ministery and Ecclesiasticall Assemblies, or from disobeying any Orders or Commands of Parliament, that a Generall Assembly of the Church, and a Parliament, were two chief Heads of their Petitions and desires, at that time when they had neither; And when they had obtained a Generall Assembly and Parliament, they chearfully submitted to both respectively.

And now the dangers of Religion in this Island being so great; as there hath been lately a Solemne Humiliation throughout this Land, upon occasion of these great and growing dangers; so we cannot but still look upon them as matters of frequent Prayer and Humiliation to our selves, as well as our Brethren in *England*; there being much sin in both Kingdomes procuring all this evill, and justly deserving these, and heavier judgements. And as wee desire in the first place to be humbled for our own sins, and the sins of this Nation, so we trust, our Brethren will bee willing to be put in minde of the necessity of their Humiliation and Repentance for the Nationall sins of that Kingdome; which wee shall wish rather to be sadly considered by them, then expressed by us. One thing we are confident of, that God hath had a speciall controversie against his People of old for the sin of a broken Covenant, and unwillingnesse to bee Reformed and Purged according to the Word of the Lord; and that till these sinnes were acknowledged and repented, his controversie did not take an end. We are no lesse confident that the godly and well affected will in tendernesse of conscience timely search out, weigh well, mourn for, and study to remove all the causes of the Lords present controversie against that Nation. What the honourable Houses of Parliament have to bee humbled for, and to reform or amend, they have been (and we trust still are) put in minde by such as are Ambassadours to them in Christs stead at their solemn humiliations. For our part, as we have alwayes mentioned them in our prayers, with thanksgivings also in their behalfe, so we now most humbly beseech the Lord, to direct and blesse them, and in their present difficulties to keep them by his Grace from all sinfull compliance, especially from establishing iniquity by a Law; to shew them why he contendeth with them, that the true cause of his controversie may be removed, and that the glory of his Name, the Kingdome, Crown, and Scepter of his Son Jesus Christ, with his Word, Lawes, Ordinances, Trueth, Ministers, may be yet more set by

in their eyes, that they also may finde a further performance of the Word of the Lord: *Exalt her and she shall promote thee.* And, *them that honour mee, I will honour.*

We shall now by the mercies of God, and in the bowels of Jesus Christ, earnestly beseech all those of whatsoever quality or condition in *England*, who have entred into the same League and Covenant with us, and especially the Houses of Parliament, the City of *London*, and Assembly of Divines, that with sound Humiliation, fervent Prayer, and making sure their Peace with God, they may joyne all care, faithfulnesse and zeal, to hold fast the profession of their Faith without wavering, against the many heresies and errors of these times; that they may according to their places and callings endeavour to the utmost of their power to prevent or hinder the laying aside or slighting of the Covenant, the re-establishment of Episcopacy, and the toleration of Popery, Prelacy, Heresie, Schisme, Superstition, or Profanenesse, and not suffer themselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, perswasion or terrour, to bee divided and withdrawn from that blessed Union and Sacred Covenant, either to the contrary side, or to a neutrality in this Cause, which so much concerneth the glorie of God, the good of the Kingdomes, and the Honour of the King; but all the dayes of their lives zealously and constantly continue therein against all opposition, and promote the same according to their power against all lets and impediments whatsoever; which things both they and wee have solemnly and in the sight of God sworn unto. And as we desired them to rest confident of the constancy of their Brethren in this Nation, in adhering to that Covenant in all the Articles thereof, which we shall by the Grace of Christ (without which we are nothing) sincerly, really, and constantly pursue and promote, so far as concerneth our Places and Callings; using our utmost endeavours towards the suppression of those errors, which have so dangerously hurt Religion in this Island: So, we expect confidently the like of our Brethren in *England* united in Covenanant with us, and that what ever they may have cause to fear or bee called to suffer, yet the Lord will so strengthen them by his grace, as that they may be able to say, *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant.* And here is the wisdome and patience of the Saints, to choose affliction rather then iniquity, to do duety in the worst of times, and to trust God with events, and in so doing, to hope to the end and wait upon the Lord, untill hee plead their cause and execute judgement for them: So shall they bee more purified and not made blacker (as, alas, some are) but whiter in times of tryall.

More particularly, wee do desire that Presbyteriall Government may be setled and put in practise throughout that Kingdom, according

according to the Word of God, and example of the best Reformed Churches: for without this wee know no other proper and effectuall remedy against the present dangers of Religion there; or for purging the Church from scandals, which are destructive either to sound Doctrine, or to Godlinesse: And herein we are confident, the experience of all the Reformed Churches will bear witnesse with us. Nor do we doubt but in *England* also, time and experience will more and more commend, not only the beautifull order, but the great utility, yea, necessity of this Government, and dispell all the clouds of aspersions and prejudices which it lieth under among such as know it not, who ought therefore to beware of speaking evill of the things they understand not. Yet we would not have our zeal for Presbyteriall Government mis-understood, as if it tended to any rigour or domineering over the flock, or to hinder and exclude that instructing in meeknesse them that oppose themselves, which the Apostolicall rule holds forth; or as if wee would have any such to bee intrusted with that Government, as are found not yet purged, either from their old profannesse, or from the Prelaticall principles and practises which were but to put a piece of new cloath unto an old garment, and so to make the rent worse; or to put new wine into old bottles, and so to lose both wine and bottles. Yea who knows whether this may not be one of the causes, (and not the least) why the present Reformation succeeds the worse, even because of so little repentance, either for the profannesse, or Prelaticall errours and corruptions of divers who have acted in it: Nevertheless, the right hand of fellowship is to bee given to all such as bring forth fruits meet for repentance, whatsoever their former errours or failings were. And to our great joy, we understand that there are many learned, able, godly, and prudent Ministers in that Kingdome, fit to be imployed in that Government, together with such able and pious men, as are to be joyned with them in the capacity of ruling Elders. It shall be a part of our prayers, that the Lord of the Harvest may send forth many more labourers in that Kingdome, where the Harvest is so great, and the Labourers so few proportionably; and in the meane while, that such as he hath already thrust out, may not be unemployed, as to the point of Discipline and Government.

Nor lastly, doth our zeal for the Covenant and Presbyteriall Government abate or diminish any thing at all from our Loyalty and Duety to the Kings Majesty, although Incendiaries and Enemies spare not to reproach this Church and Kingdome with Disloyaltie; Yet such calumnies will easily be repudiate by all who will examine the whole course of the publicke proceedings in this Nation, in reference to the King; and particularly the Declaration of the Parliament of this Kingdome, dated *January* 16. 1647.

Wherefore

Wherefore passing all such calumnies, which cannot but be hatefull to God and good Men, wee do clearly and candidly professe, That the Covenant and Presbyteriall Government are so far from hindering or excluding our duety to the King, that it is thereby very much strengthened and supported; for our giving to God what is Gods doth not hinder us, but help us, to give unto Cæsar what is Cæsars. And wee earnestly wish his Majesties Royall heart may bee graciously inclined to the just desires of his good Subjects in both Kingdomes, and to that happy settlement of Truth and Peace, Religion and Righteousnesse, which may bee as well for the establishment of his own Throne, as for the good of his people.

Now the Prince of Peace Himself, grant this afflicted People, tossed with tempests and not comforted, a safe & wel-grounded Peace, bring light out of the present darknesse, and order out of all these confusions, give unto all who are waiting for the consolation of Israel *good hope through grace*, *comfort their hearts*, *stablish them in in every good word and work*, make his Cause to triumph at last over all opposition, and the enemies foot to slide in due time, and so put a new Song of praise in the mouths of his people. AMEN.

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## 24. *August* 1647. *Antemeridiem.* Sess. 19.

## *Act for observing the Directions of the Generall Assembly for Secret and Private Worship, and mutuall edification, and for censuring such as neglect Familie Worship.*

THE Generall Assembly, after mature deliberation, doth approve the following Rules and Directions, for cherishing Piety and preventing Division and Schisme, and doth appoint Ministers and Ruling Elders in each Congregation to take speciall care that these Directions be observed and followed; As likewise that Presbyteries and Provinciall Synods enquire and make tryall whether the saids Directions bee duely observed in their bounds, and to reprove or censure (according to the quality of the offence) such as shall bee found to bee reproveable or censurable therein. And to the end that these Directions may not be rendred ineffectuall and unprofitable among some

some through the usuall neglect of the very substance of the duty of Family Worship, The Assembly doth further require and appoint Ministers and Ruling Elders, to make diligent search and enquiry in the Congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there bee among them any Family or Families which use to neglect this necessary duty; And if any such Family be found, the head of that Family is to be first admonished privately to amend this fault; And in case of his continuing therein, he is to be gravely and sadly reproved by the Session. After which reproof, if he be found still to neglect Familie Worship, Let him be for his obstinacy, in such an offence, suspended and debarred from the Lords Supper, as being justly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein till he amend.

## *The Directions of the Generall Assembly, for Secret and Private Worship and mutuall edification, for cherishing Piety, for maintaining Unitie, and avoiding Schisme and Division.*

BEsides the publike Worship in Congregations, mercifully established in this Land, in great purity; It is expedient and necessary, that Secret Worship of each person alone, and Private Worship of Families be pressed and set up: That with Nationall Reformation, the profession and power of Godlinesse both Personall and Domestick bee advanced.

I. And first for Secret Worship; It is most necessar, that every one apart and by themselves be given to Prayer and Meditation, The unspeakable benefit whereof is best known to them who are most exercised therein: This being the meane whereby in a speciall way communion with God is entertained, and right preparation for all other duties obtained: And therefore it becometh not onely Pastors, within their severall Charges, to presse Persons of all sorts to performe this dutie Morning and Evening, and at other occasions, but also it is incumbent to the head of every Family, to have a care that both themselves and all within their charge be daily diligent herein.

II. The ordinar duties comprehended under the exercise of Pietie, which should be in Families when they are conveened to that effect, are these: First, Prayer and Praises performed, with a speciall reference as well to the publike condition of the Kirk of God and this Kingdome, as to the present case of the Familie, and

and every member thereof. Next, Reading of Scriptures with Catechizing in a plaine way, that the understandings of the simpler may be the better enabled to profit under the publike Ordinances, and they made more capable to understand the Scriptures when they are read; Together with godly conferences tending to the edification of all the members in the most holy faith: As also, admonition and rebuke upon just reasons from these who have Authority in the Familie.

III. As the Charge and Office of interpreting the holy Scriptures, is a part of the Ministeriall calling, which none (howsoever otherwise qualified) should take upon him in any place, but he that is duely called thereunto by God and his Kirk: So in every Familie where there is any that can read, The holy Scriptures should be read ordinarily to the Family; And it is commendable that thereafter they confer, and by way of conference make some good use of what hath beene read and heard: As for example, if any sin be reproved in the Word read, use may bee made thereof, to make all the Familie circumspect and watchfull against the same; Or, if any judgement be threatned or mentioned to have beene inflicted in that portion of Scripture which is read, use may bee made to make all the Familie fear, lest the same or a worse judgement befall them, unlesse they beware of the sin that procured it: And finally, if any duety bee required, or comfort held forth in a promise, use may bee made to stirre up themselves to imploy Christ for strength to enable them for doing the commanded duty, and to apply the offered comfort; In all which the Master of the Familie is to have the chief hand, And any member of the Familie may propone ane question or doubt for resolution.

IIII. The head of the Family is to take care that none of the Familie withdraw himself from any part of Familie Worship: And seeing the ordinar performance of all the parts of Family-worship belongeth properly to the head of the Family, The Minister is to stirre up such as are lasie, and traine up such as are weak to a fitnesse for these exercises. It being alwayes free to persons of qualitie to entertain one approven by the Presbyterie for performing Familie Exercise; And in other families where the head of the Familie is unfit, that another constantly residing in the Familie approven by the Minister and Session, may be imployed in that service; Wherein the Minister and Session are to be countable to the Presbyterie. And if a Minister by divine providence bee brought to any Familie, It is requisite, that at no time he conveen a part of the Familie for Worship secluding the rest; Except in singular cases, specially concerning these parties, which (in Christian prudence) need not, or ought not to bee imparted to others.

V. Let no Idler who hath no particular calling, or vagrant person under pretence of a calling, be suffered to perform Worship in Families,

Families, to or for the same: Seeing persons tainted with errours or aiming at division, may be ready (after that manner) to creep into houses and lead captive silly and unstable souls.

VI. At Family Worship a speciall care is to be had, that each Familie keep by themselves; Neither requiring, inviting, nor admitting persons from divers Families; Unlesse it be these who are lodged with them or at meal, or otherwise with them upon some lawfull occasion.

VII. Whatsoever hath been the effects and fruits of meetings of persons of divers Families in the times of corruption or trouble (in which cases many things are commendable, which otherwise are not tolerable) Yet when God hath blessed us with Peace and the purity of the Gospel, such meetings of persons of divers Families (except in the cases mentioned in these Directions) are to be disapproved, as tending to the hinderance of the Religious exercise of each Familie by it self, to the prejudice of the publike Ministery, to the renting of the Families of particular Congregations, and (in progresse of time) of the whole Kirk; besides many offences which may come thereby, to the hardning of the hearts of carnall men, and grief of the godly.

VIII. On the Lords Day, after every one of the Family apart, and the whole Family together have sought the Lord (in whose hands the preparation of mens hearts are) to fit them for the publike Worship, and to blesse to them the publike Ordinances; The Master of the Familie ought to take care that all within his charge repair to the publike Worship, that he and they may joyne with the rest of the Congregation: And, the publike Worship being finished, after prayer, he should take an account what they have heard, And thereafter to spend the rest of the time which they may spare, in Catechising and in spirituall conferences upon the Word of God; Or else (going apart) they ought to apply themselves to reading, meditation, and secret prayer, that they may confirme and increase their Communion with God: That so the profit which they found in the publike Ordinances may bee cherished and promoved, and they more edified unto eternall life.

IX. So many as can conceive prayer, ought to make use of that gift of God: Albeit these who are rude and weaker may begin at a set form of prayer; But so, as they bee not sluggish in stirring up in themselves (according to their daily necessities) the spirit of prayer, which is given to all the children of God in some measure. To which effect, they ought to bee the more fervent and frequent in secret prayer to God, for enabling of their hearts to conceive, and their tongues to expresse convenient desires to God for their Familie. And in the mean time, for their greater

encouragement, let these materialls of prayer be meditated upon, and made use of, as followeth.

Let them confesse to God how unworthy they are to come in his presence, and how unfit to worship his Majesty; And therefore earnestly ask of God the spirit of prayer.

They are to confesse their sins, and the sins of the Familie, accusing, judging, and condemning themselves for them, till they bring their souls to some measure of true humiliation.

They are to pour out their souls to God, in the Name of Christ, by the spirit, for forgivinesse of sins, for Grace to repent, to believe, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and that they may serve God with joy and delight, walking before him.

They are to give thanks to God for his many mercies to his People, and to themselves, and especially for his love in Christ, and for the light of the Gospel.

They are to pray for such particular benefits, Spirituall and Temporall, as they stand in need of for the time, (whether it be Morning or Evening) as health or sicknesse, prosperitie or adversitie.

They ought to pray for the Kirk of Christ in general, for all the Reformed Kirks, and for this Kirk in particular, and for all that suffer for the Name of Christ, for all our Superiours, The Kings Majesty, the Queene, and their Children, for the Magistrates, Ministers, and whole body of the Congregation whereof they are members, as well for their Neighbours absent in their lawfull affaires, as for those that are at home.

The prayer may be closed with an earnest desire, that God may be glorified in the comming of the Kingdome of his Son, and in the doing of his wil; And with assurance that themselves are accepted, and what they have asked according to his will shall be done.

X. These exercises ought to be performed in great sinceritie without delay, laying aside all Exercises of worldly busines or hinderances, Notwithstanding the mockings of Atheists, and profane men; In respect of the great mercies of God to this Land, and of his severe Corrections wherewith lately he hath exercised us. And to this effect, persons of eminency (and all Elders of the Kirk) not onely ought to stir up themselves and their Families to diligence herein; But also to concurre effectually, that in all other Families, where they have Power and Charge, the said exercises be conscionably performed.

XI. Besides the ordinary duties in Families which are abovementioned, extraordinary duties both of humiliation and thanksgiving are to bee carefully performed in Families, when the Lord by extraordinary occasions (private or publike) calleth for them.

XII. Seeing the Word of God requireth, That wee should consider

consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; Therefore, at all times, and specially in this time wherein profanitie abounds, and mockers walking after their own lusts think it strange that others run not with them to the same excesse of riot, Every member of this Kirk ought to stir up themselves and one another to the duties of mutuall Edification, by instruction, admonition, rebuke, exhorting one another to manifest the Grace of God, in denying ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, and in living godly, soberly, and righteously in this present world, by comforting the feeble minded, and praying with, or, for one another; Which duties respectively are to be performed upon speciall occasions offered by divine providence; As namely, when under any calamity, crosse, or great difficultie, counsell or comfort is sought, Or when an offender is to bee reclaimed by private admonition, and if that bee not effectuall, by joyning one or two more in the admonition, according to the rule of Christ; that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

XIII. And becauſe it is not given to every one to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to a wearied or diſtreſſed conſcience, It is expedient, that a perſon (in that caſe) finding no eaſe after the uſe of all ordinary means private and publike, have their addreſſe to their own Paſtour, or ſome experienced Chriſtian: But, if the perſon troubled in conſcience be of that condition, or of that ſex, that diſcretion, modeſty, or fear of ſcandall, requireth a godly grave and ſecret friend to be preſent with them in their ſaid addreſſe, It is expedient that ſuch a friend be preſent.

XIV. When perſons of divers Families are brought together by divine providence, being abroad upon their particular Vocations, or any neceſſary occaſions, As they would have the Lord their God with them whitherſoever they go, they ought to walk with God, and not neglect the duties of Prayer and Thankſgiving, but take care that the ſame be performed by ſuch as the company ſhall judge fitteſt: And that they likewiſe take heed that no corrupt communication proceed out of their mouth, but that which is good, to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace to the hearers.

The driſt and ſcope of all theſe Directions is no other, but that upon the one part, the power and practice of godlineſſe among all the Miniſters and Members of this Kirk, according to their ſeverall places and vocations, may be cheriſhed and advanced, and all impietie and mocking of Religious Exerciſes ſuppreſſed; And upon the other part, that under the name and pretext of Religious Exerciſes, no ſuch meetings or practices be allowed, as are apt to breed Error, Scandall, Schiſme, contempt or miſ-regard of the publike Ordinances and Miniſters, or neglect of the duties of particular Callings, or ſuch other evils as are the works not of the Spirit but of the Fleſh, and are contrary to Truth and Peace.

## *Act against such as withdraw themselves from the publike Worship in their own Congregation.*

SInce it hath pleased God of his infinite goodnesse to blesse his Kirk within this Nation, with the riches of the Gospel, in giving to us his Ordinances in great purity, liberty, and withall, a comely and well-established order: The Assembly, in the zeal of God, for preserving Order, Unitie and Peace in the Kirk, for maintaining that respect which is due to the Ordinances and Ministers of Jesus Christ, for preventing Schisme, noysome Errours, and all unlawfull Practices, which may follow on the Peoples withdrawing themselves from their own Congregations, Doth charge every Minister to bee diligent in fulfilling his Ministerie, to be holy and grave in his conversation, to be faithfull in Preaching, declaring the whole counsell of God, and as he hath occasion from the Text of Scripture to reprove the sins and errours, and presse the duties of the time; and in all those, to observe the rules prescribed by the Acts of Assembly; wherein if he be negligent, he is to be censured by his own Presbytery. As also Ordains every Member in every Congregation to keep their own Paroch Kirk, to communicate there in the Word and Sacraments; And if any person or persons shall hereafter usually absent themselves from their own Congregations, except in urgent cases made known to, and approven by the Presbytery, The Ministers of these Congregations whereto they resort, shall both in publike by Preaching, and in private by admonition, shew their dislike of their withdrawing from their own Minister; That in so doing, they may witnesse to all that heare them, their due care to strengthen the hands of their fellow labourers in the work of the Lord, and their detestation of any thing that may tend to separation, or any of the abovementioned evils; Hereby their own Flock will be confirmed in their stedfastnesse, and the unstable spirits of others will be rectified. Likeas the Minister of that Congregation from which they do withdraw, shall labour first by private admonition to reclaim them; And if any after private admonition given by their own Pastour do not amend, in that case the Pastour shall delate the forsaid persons to the Session, who shall cite and censure them as contemners of the comely order of the Kirk; And if the matter be not taken order with there, It is to bee brought to the Presbytery: For the better observing whereof, the Presbyteries at the Visitation of their severall Kirks, and Provinciall Assemblies, in their censure of the severall Presbyteries, shall enquire hereanent: Which inquirie and report shall be registrate in the Provinciall Books, that their diligence may be seen in the Generall Assembly. 26 *August*

## 26. *August* 1647. *Postmeridiem.* Sess. XXII.

### *Approbation of the proceedings of the Commission of the preceeding Assembly.*

THe Generall Assembly after mature deliberation, do ratifie and approve the whole Acts and Conclusions of the Commissioners of the preceeding Assembly for publike affaires now tryed and examined; Declaring that they have proceeded therein with much zeal, wisdome, vigilancie, and according to their Commission.

## 27. *August* 1647. *Antemeridiem.* Sess. XXIII.

### *Approbation of the Confession of Faith.*

A Confession of Faith for the Kirks of God in the three Kingdomes, being the chiefest part of that Uniformity in Religion which by the solemne League & Covenant we are bound to endeavour; And there being accordingly a Confession of Faith agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines sitting at *Westminster*, with the assistance of Commissioners from the Kirk of *Scotland*; Which Confession was sent from our Commissioners at *London* to the Commissioners of the Kirk met at *Edinburgh* in *January* last, and hath been in this Assembly twice publikely read over, examined, and considered; Copies thereof being also Printed, that it might be particularly perused by all the Members of this Assembly, unto whom frequent intimation was publikely made, to put in their doubts and objections if they had any; And the said Confession being upon due examination thereof found by the Assembly to bee most agreable to the Word of God, and in nothing contrary to the received Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government of this Kirk: And lastly, it being so necessary and so much longed for, That the said Confession be with all possible diligence and expedition approved and established in both Kingdoms, as a principall part of the intended Uniformity in Religion, and as a speciall means for the more effectuall suppressing of the many dangerous errours and heresies of these times; The Generall Assembly doth therefore after mature diliberation Agree unto and Approve the said Confession as to the truth of the matter

matter (judging it to be most orthodox and grounded upon the Word of God) and also as to the point of Uniformity, Agreeing for our part that it be a common Confession of Faith for the three Kingdomes. The Assembly doth also blesse the Lord, and thankfully acknowledge his great mercy, in that so excellent a Confession of Faith is prepared, and thus far agreed upon in both Kingdomes; which we look upon as a great strengthning of the true Reformed Religion against the common enemies thereof. But lest our intention and meaning be in some particulars misunderstood, It is hereby expresly Declared and Provided, that the not mentioning in this Confession the severall sorts of Ecclesiasticall Officers and Assemblies, shall be no prejudice to the Truth of Christ in these particulars to be expressed fully in the Directory of Government. It is further Declared, that the Assembly understandeth some parts of the second Article of the thirty one Chapter, only of Kirks not settled or constituted in point of Government; And that although in such Kirks, a Synod of Ministers and other fit persons may be called by the Magistrates authority and nomination without any other Call, to consult and advise with about matters of Religion; And although likewise the Ministers of Christ without delegation from their Churches, may of themselves, and by vertue of their Office meet together Synodically in such Kirks not yet constituted; Yet neither of these ought to be done in Kirks constituted and setled: It being alwayes free to the Magistrate to advise with Synods of Ministers and ruling Elders meeting upon delegation from their Churches, either ordinarly, or being indicted by his Authority occasionally and *pro re nata*; It being also free to assemble together Synodically, as well *pro re nata*, as at the ordinary times upon delegation from the Churches, by the intrinsicall power received from Christ, as often as it is necessary for the good of the Church so to assem ble, in case the Magistrate to the detriment of the Church withhold or deny his consent, the necessity of occasionall Assemblies being first remonstrate unto him by humble supplication.

*Edinb.*

## *Edinburgh* 28 *August* 1647. *Antemeridiem.* Sess. XXV.

### *Act for revising the Paraphrase of the Psalmes brought from* England, *with a recommendation for Translating the other Scripturall Songs in Meeter.*

THe Generall Assembly, having considered the report of the Committee, concerning the Paraphrase of the Psalmes sent from *England*: And finding that it is very necessary, that the said Paraphrase be yet revised; Therefore doth appoint Master *John Adamson* to examine the first fourty Psalmes, Master *Thomas Craufurd* the second fourty, Master *John Row* the third fourty, and Master *John Nevey* the last thirty Psalms of that Paraphrase; and in their Examination they shall not only observe what they think needs to bee amended, but also to set downe their own essay for correcting thereof; And for this purpose recommends to them, to make use of the travels of *Rowallen*, Master *Zachary Boyd*, or of any other on that subject, but especially of our own Paraphrase, that what they finde better in any of these Works may be chosen: and likewise they shall make use of the animadversions sent from Presbyteries, who for this cause are hereby desired to hasten their observations unto them; And they are to make report of their labours herein to the Commission of the Assembly for publike affaires against their first meeting in *February* next: And the Commission after revising thereof, shall send the same to Provinciall Assemblies, to bee transmitted to Presbyteries, that by their further consideration, the matter may be fully prepared to the next Assembly: And because some Psalmes in that Paraphrase sent from *England* are composed in verses which do not agree with the Common-tunes, Therfore it is also recommended that these Psalms be likewise turned in other verses which may agree to the Common-tunes, that is, having the first line of eight syllabs, and the second line of six, that so both versions being together, use may bee made of either of them in Congregations as shall bee found convenient: And the Assembly doth further recommend, That M. *Zachary Boyd* be at the paines to translate the other Scripturall Songs in meeter, and to report his travels also to the Commission of Assembly, that after their Examination therof, they may send the same to Presbyteries to be there considered untill the next Generall Assembly.

*Act*

## *Act recommending the execution of the Act of Parliament at Perth, for uplifting pecuniall paines to bee imployed upon pious uses, and of all Acts of Parliament made against excommunicate Persons.*

THe Generall Assembly doth seriously Recommend and Ordaine, That Presbyteries diligently endeavour, that the ninth Act of the Parliament holden at *Perth*, *Anno* 1645. Concerning the uplifting of pecuniall paines to bee imployed upon pious uses, may bee put to due execution within their severall bounds: And also that the Acts of Parliament against excommunicate Persons, especially the twentieth Act of the Parliament in March last, be also carefully execute: And that they cause use all diligence to that effect, And account hereof shall bee required in Provinciall and Generall Assemblies.

## *Ult Augusti* 1647. *Antemeridiem.*
## Sess. XXVII.

## *Act discharging the importing, venting or spreading of erronious Books or Papers.*

THe Generall Assembly considering how the errours of Independency and Separation (have in our Neighbour Kingdome of *England*) spread as a Gangræn, and do daily eat as a Canker; In so much that exceeding many Errours, Heresies, Schismes, and Blaspemies, have issued therefrom, and are sheltered thereby; And how possible it is, for the same evils, to invade, and overspread this Kirk and Kingdome, (lying within the same Island) by the spreading of their erronious Books, Pamphlets, Lybels, and Letters, and by conversing with them that are infected with these errours, except the same bee timeously prevented; Doe therefore, In the Name of God, Inhibit and Discharge all Members of this Kirk and Kingdome, to converse with Persons tainted with such errours; Or to import, sell, spread, vent, or dispers such erronious Books or Papers: But that they beware of, and abstain from Books maintaining Independencie or Separation, and from all Antinomian, Anabaptisticall,

Anabaptisticall, and other erronious Books and Papers; Requiring all Ministers to warne their flocks against such Bookes in generall, and particularly such as are most plausible, insinuating, and dangerous: And to try carefully from time to time if any such Bookes bee brought into this Countrey from *England*, or from beyond Seas (which is especially recommended to Ministers on Sea Coasts, or Towns where any Stationers are) and if any shall bee found, to present the same to the Presbyterie, that some course may be taken to hinder the dispersing thereof: And hereby all Presbyteries, and Synods, are ordained to try and Proceesse such as shall transgresse against the premisses or any part of the same. And the Assembly also doth seriously recommend to Civill Magistrates, that they may be pleased to be assisting to Ministers and Presbyteries in execution of this Act, and to concurre with their authority in every thing to that effect.

## *Act for debarring of Complyers in the first Classe from Ecclesiastick office.*

THe Generall Assembly Declares and Ordaines, That no Person who is guilty of Complyance in the first Classe mentioned in the Act of the preceeding Assembly, shall bee received in any Ecclesiasticall charge, untill the evidence of his repentance before the Presbyterie and Congregation be reported to the Synode to which he belongs, and to the Generall Assembly, and their consent obtained for his bearing office: And if any such Person be already received unto the Eldership of any particular Congregation, yet he shall not be admitted to be a Member of any Presbyterie, Synode, or Generall Assemblie, untill (upon the evidence of his repentance) the consent and approbation of these Judicatories respectively bee obtained thereto.

## *Act for pressing and furthering the plantation of Kirks.*

THe Generall Assembly considering how the Work of Provision, Plantation, convenient Dividing, Dismembring, better uniting or enlarging of Parish Kirks is hitherto foreslowed, to the great prejudice of many Ministers, many good People, and hinderance of the Work of Reformation; Doth therefore Ordaine, That all Presbyteries have speciall care that the present opportunity bee

diligently improved by all their Members, as need is, before the Commission for Plantation of Kirks, as they would not be found censurable for neglect. And that every Presbytery send in to the next Generall Assembly the names of all their Parishes, with declaration which of them have Ministers, which not, what is the largenesse of the bounds, commodious or incommodious situation of each Parish Kirk, what is the number of Communicants, what Kirks are under Patrons, what not, who are the severall Patrons, what is the nature and quantitie of the present provision, or possible ground of further provision for competent Maintenance, where the same is not sufficiently provided already: As also, what Parishes are united or disunited or bettered already, and in what measure by the said Commission; That the Generall Assembly being acquaint therewith, may doe accordingly both for censuring Neglecters, and finding out Overtures for better furtherance of the Work for time to come. Moreover it is hereby Ordained, That the next ensuing Provinciall Synodes, crave account of the severall Presbyteries their diligence, And presse that they have it ready in writ to present to the Provinciall Synodes in April next to come, that so all may bee in readinesse and the full account made at the next Generall Assembly.

## *Act for censuring absents from the Generall Assemblie.*

THe Generall Assembly considering the absence of many Commmissioners in this and other preceeding Assemblies, and that many of those present have gone from the Assembly before the dissolving thereof: Therefore, for remedie hereof in time coming, Doth Ordaine, that hereafter, Every Commissioner from Presbyteries and Universities who shall be absent from the Assembly without a reasonable excuse notified to the Assembly, Or who being present shall goe from the Assembly before the dissolving thereof without licence, shall be suspended by the Assembly untill the Provinciall Synode next thereafter following.

*Renovation*

## *Renovation of former Acts of Assembly for Triall and Admission of Expectants to the Ministerie.*

THe Generall Assembly, doth hereby renew and confirme all former Acts and Ordinances for triall and admission of Expectants to the Ministery; Especially the Articles thereanent allowed by the Generall Assembly 1596. and approven in the Assemblie at *Glasgow* 1638. The thirteenth Article concerning the age of intrants to the Ministery and the twentie fourth Article concerning the triall of Expectants, Of an Act of the said Assembly at *Glasgow*, Sess. 23. And the Act of the Assembly at S. *Andrews* 1642. Sess. 7. concerning Lists for presentations from the King, and the trial of Expectants, *&c.* Ordaining Presbyteries to observe the same carefully in all time coming.

## *Eodem die*, Sess. XXVIII. *Postmeridiem.*

## *Renovation of the Commission for prosecuting the Treaty for Uniformity in* England.

THe Generall Assembly, Taking to their consideration that the Treaty of Uniformity in Religion in all his Majesties Dominions is not yet perfected; Therefore, Renews the Power and Commission granted by preceeding Assemblies for prosecuting that Treaty, unto these Persons afternamed, *viz.* Master *Robert Douglas*, Master *Samuel Rutherfurd*, Master *Robert Baillie*, Master *George Gillespie* Ministers: And *John* Earle of Lauderdaill, *John* Lord Balmerino, and Sir *Archibald Johnstoun* of Waristoun Elders; Authorizing them with full Power to prosecute the said Treaty of Uniformity with the Honourable Houses of the Parliament of *England*, and the Reverend Assembly of Divines there, or any Committees appointed by them: And to doe all and every thing which may advance, perfit, and bring that Treaty to an happy conclusion, conforme to the Commissions given thereanent.

## *Renovation of the Commission for the publike affaires of the Kirk.*

THe Generall Assembly taking to their consideration, that in respect the great Work of Uniformity in Religion in all his Majesties Dominions is not yet perfected, (though by the Lords blessing there is a good progresse made in the same) there is a necessity of renewing the Commissions granted formerly for prosecuting and perfecting that great Work; Doe therefore renew the Power and Commission granted for the publike Affaires of the Kirk by the Generall Assemblies held in S. *Andrews* 1642. and at *Edinburgh* 1643. 1644. 1645. and 1646. unto the Persons following, *viz.* Masters, *Alexander Casse, Samuel Douglas, Robert Knox, William Penman, James Guthrie, Robert Cuninghame, David Fletcher, Robert Lawder, Andrew Stevenson, Robert Davidson, David Calderwood, James Fleming, Robert Ker, James Fairlie, Oliver Colt, Patrick Sibbald, Andrew Ramsay, John Adamson, Robert Douglas, William Colvill, George Gillespie, Mungo Law, Andrew Fairfoul, George Lesly, Robert Lawrie, Alexander Spittle, Alexander Dickson, John Hay, Thomas Vasse, Ephraim Melvill, Patrick Scheill, Alexander Simmervail, George Bennet, Alexander Levingstoun, Robert Murray, Alexander Rollock, William Menzies, Alexander Ireland, John Friebairn, George Murray, Henrie Guthrie, William Fustice, Robert Wright, Henrie Livingstoun, James Hammiltoun, George Gladstanes, Bernard Sanderson, Andrew Lawder, George Rutherfurd, John Levingston, George Hutcheson, John Bell, Heugh Mackaile, John Nevey, Matthew Brisbane, John Hammiltoun, Allan Ferguson, David Dickson, Zachary Boyd, Robert Ramsay, Robert Baillie, James Nasmith, Francis Aird, Robert Birnie, Thomas Kirkaldie, Evan Cameron, Robert Blair, Coline Adam, George Hammiltoun, Samuel Rutherfurd, Alexander Colvill, John Ramsay, James Martein, William Levingstoun, Thomas Melvill, John Smith, Fredrick Carmichaell, Patrick Gillespie, Alexander Moncrief, John Duncan, James Sibbald, Walter Bruce, George Pittillo, Andrew Affleck, John Barclay, Thomas Peirson, William Rait, David Strachan, Andrew Cant, William Douglas, John Forbes, George Sharp, William Chalmer, Joseph Brodie, Alexander Simmer, Gilbert Anderson, William Smith* Ministers; And *Archibald* Marques of Argile, *John* Earle of Crawfurd, *Alexander* E. of Eglintoun, *William* E. of Glencairne, *John* E. of Cassils, *James* E. of Home, *James* E. of Tullibairdine, *Francis* E. of Bukcleuch, *John* E of Lawderdaill, *William* E. of Lothian, *James* E. of Finlatour, *William* E. of Lanerk, *James* Earle of Callendar, *Archibald* Lord Angus, *George* L. Brichen, *John* L. Yester, *John* L. Balmerino,

*James*

*James* L. Cowper, *John* Lord Barganie, Sir *Archibald Johnstoun* of Warristoun, Sir *John Hope* of Craighall, *Arthur Areskine* of Scotiscraig, *Alexander Fraser* of Phillorth, *Frederick Lyon* of Brigtoun, *James Mackdougall* of Garthland, Sir *William Cockburne* of Langton, Sir *Andrew Ker* of Greinheid, Sir *Heugh Campbell* of Cesnock, Sir *James Levingstoun* of Kilsyth, Sir *Thomas Ruthven* of *Freeland*, Sir *Gilbert Ramsay* of Balmayne, *John Henderson* of Fordell, *Walter Dundas* younger of that ilk, Sir *William Scot* younger of Harden, Sir *Lodovick Gordoun*, Master *George Winrhame* of Libertoun, *Alexander Levingstoun* of Saltcoats, *John Birsbane* of Bishoptoun, Sir *Robert Douglas* of Tilliquhillie, *James Pringle* of Torwoodlie, Sir *Iames Nicolsone* of Colbrandspath, *William Ker* of Newtoun, *William Forbes* younger of Lesly, *John Kennedy* of Carmucks, *Robert Arburthnot* of Findowrie, *Alexander Brodie* of Letham, Master *Robert Narne* younger of Strathurd, Master *James Schoneir* of Caskeberrie, *James Ruchheid*, *Lawrence Henderson*, *James Stewart*, *David Douglas*, *John Jaffray*, *George Porterfield*, *John Semple*, *John Kennedy*, *William Glendinning*, Master *John Cowan*, *John Mill* Elders: Giving unto them full Power and Commission, to doe all and every thing for prosecuting, advancing, perfecting, and bringing the said Work of Uniformity in Religion in all his Majesties Dominions to a happy conclusion, conform to the former Commissions granted by preceding Assemblies thereanent. And to that effect, Appoints them or any seventeene of them, whereof thirteene shall bee Ministers, to meet heer in this City in the afternoone at four hours, and thereafter upon the last Wednesdayes of November, February, and May next, and upon any other day, and in any other place they shall think fit. Renewing also to the Persons before named, the Power contained in the Act of the Assembly 1643. intituled, *A reference to the Commission anent the Persons designed to repaire to the Kingdome of England*; As likewise the Power contained in the Act of Assemblie 1644. Sess. 6. for sending Ministers to the Armie. And further, in case Delinquents have no constant residence in any one Presbyterie, Or if Presbyteries be negligent or overawed, in these cases, The Assemblie gives to the Persons before named, full power of censuring Complyers and Persons disaffected to the Covenant according to the Acts of Assemblie; Declaring always and Providing, that Ministers shall not bee deposed but in one of the Quarterly meetings of this Commission; With full power to them to treat and determine in the matters aforesaid, and in all other matters referred unto them by this Assemblie, as fully and freely as if the same were here particularly expressed, and with as ample power as any Commission of any former Generall Assemblies hath had, or been in use of before, They being alwayes for their whole proceedings countable to, and censurable by the next Generall Assembly.

*Desires*

## *Desires and Overtures from the Commissioners of Universities, and the Assemblies answer thereto.*

1. THe Commissioners of Universities represents to the Assembly: First, That the Overtures of the Assembly 1643. for the visitation of Schools and advancement of Learning are very much neglected.

*The Assembly recommends to Synodes to take account of the observation of these Overtures.*

2. That it were good to exhort all the Universities, to be carefull to take account of all their Schollers on the Sabbath-day of the Sermons, and of their lessons of the Catechisme.

*The Assembly approves this Overture, and recommends accordingly.*

3. That all the Universities bee exhorted to send their Commissioners instructed with answers to the Overtures agreed upon by the Commissioners of Universities, and which from this meeting of their Commissioners shall bee communicate to them, and this to bee when their Commissioners come in Februar or March to the Commmission of the Kirk.

*The Assemblie recommends to Universities to bee carefull hereof.*

4. That the Overtures concerning the providing of Bursars for Divinity be recommended to Presbyteries and Synodes, and that they report their diligence to the next Assembly.

*The Assembly allowes this Article, and recommends accordingly.*

*Edinb.*

## *Edinburgh* 1. *September* 1647. Sess. Ult.

## *The Assemblies Letter to their Countreymen in* Poleland, Swedland, Denmarke, *and* Hungarie.

*Unto the Scots Merchants and others our Countrey-People scattered in* Poleland, Swedland, Denmarke, *and* Hungary; *The Generall Assembly of the Kirk of* Scotland *wisheth Grace Mercy and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

ALthough this Kirk of *Scotland*, whiles spoiled of her Liberties under the Prelaticall tyrannie, had much difficultie and wrestling to preserve the true reformed Religion from being quite extinguished among our selves; yet since the mighty and out-stretched arme of the Lord our God hath brought us out of that *Egypt*, and hath restored to us well constituted and free nationall Synods, It hath been our desire and endeavour to set forward the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and the purity of his Ordinances, not only throughout this Nation, but in other parts also so far as God gave us a call and opportunity and opened a way unto us. And among other things of this nature we have more particularly taken into our serious thoughts the sad and lamentable condition of many thousands of you our Country-men who are scattered abroad as sheepe having no shepherd, and are through the want of the meanes of knowledge grace and salvation, exposed to the greatest spirituall dangers, whether through ignorance or through manifold tentations to errors and false Religions, or through the occasions and snares of sinne.

Wee have therefore thought it incumbent to us to put you in minde of the one thing necessary, while you are so carefull and troubled about the things of the world. And although we do not disallow your going abroad to follow any lawfull calling or way of livelyhood, yet seeing it cannot profit a man although he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, and seeing you have travelled so farre, and taken so much pains to get uncertain riches which cannot deliver in the day of the wrath of the Lord, and which men know not who shall inherit; We doe from our affection to the salvation of your immortall souls most earnestly beseech and warn you to cry after knowledge and lift up your voyce for understanding, seeking her as silver, and searching for her as for hid treasures, and so play the wise Merchants in purchasing the Pearl of price, and in laying up a sure foundation for the time to come, by acquainting your souls with Jesus Christ, and by faith taking

taking hold of him whose free grace is now offered and held out to sinners, excluding none among all the kindreds of the earth who will come unto him. God forbid that you should let slip the time and offers of grace, or neglect any warning of this kinde sent to you in the name of the Lord. We shall hope better things of you, and that knowing the acceptable time and the day of salvation wil not alwayes last, but the Lord Jesus is to be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel, you will the rather bestirre your selves timely and with all diligence to seek the Lord while he may bee found, to endeavour that you may have among you the ordinary means of grace and salvation, to pray that God would give you Pastors according to his heart, who shall feede you with knowledge and understanding, to consult also and agree among your selves with consent of your Superiors under whom you live (whose favour and good will we trust will not be wanting to you in so good and necessary a work) for setting up the worship of God and Ecclesiasticall Discipline among you according to the form established and received in this your mother Kirk, and for a way of setled maintenance to Pastors and Teachers; Which if you do, our Commissioners appointed to meet from time to time in the intervall betwixt this and the next Nationall Assembly, will bee ready (upon your desire made known to them) to provide some able and godly Ministers for you, as likewise to communicate to you our Directory for the publike worship of God, and our form of Ecclesiasticall Governement and Discipline; together with the Confession of Faith and Catechisme.

And in the meane time we exhort you that ye neglect not the worship of God in secret and in your families, and that ye continue stedfast in the Profession of that faith in which yee was baptised, and by a godly, righteous, and sober conversation adorn the Gospel; and with all, that distance of place make you not the lesse sensible of your Countries sufferings, both in respect of the just judgements of God for the sinnes of the land, and in respect of the malice of Enemies for the Common Cause and Covenant of the three Kingdoms, of which happie conjunction, notwithstanding we do not repent us, but by the grace of God shall continue faithful and stedfast therein.

This Letter wee have thought fit to bee Printed and published, that it may be with the greater ease and conveniency conveyed to the many severall places of your habitation or traffique. Consider what we have said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.

EDINBURGH, Augusti 31. 1647.

*Subscribed in name of the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland.*

*Mr.* Robert Douglasse *Moderator.*

*Act*

## *Act concerning the Hundred and eleven Propositions therein mentioned.*

BEing tender of so great an ingagement by Solemn Covenant, sincerely, really, and constantly to endeavour in our Places and Callings, the preservation of the Reformed Religion in this Kirk of *Scotland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government, the Reformation of Religion in the Kingdomes of *England*, and *Ireland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best Reformed Kirks, and to endeavour the neareſt Conjunction and Uniformity in all these, together with the extirpation of Heresie, Schisme, and whatsoever shall bee found contrary to sound Doctrine: And considering withall that one of the speciall meanes which it becometh us in our Places and Callings to use in pursuance of these ends, is in zeal for the true Reformed Religion, to give our publike testimony against the dangerous Tenents of *Erastianisme*, *Independencie*, and which is falsely called *Liberty of Conscience*, which are not only contrary to sound Doctrine, but more speciall lets and hinderances as well to the preservation of our own received Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government, as to the Work of Reformation and Uniformity in *England* and *Ireland*. The Generall Assembly upon these considerations, having heard publikely read the CXI * following Propositions exhibited and tendered by some Brethren, who were appointed to prepare Articles or Propositions for the vindication of the Trueth in these particulars, Doth unanimously approve and agree unto these eight generall Heads of Doctrine therein contained and asserted, *viz.* 1. That the Ministery of the Word and the Administration of the Sacraments of the New Testament, Baptisme and the Lords Supper, are standing Ordinances instituted by God himself, to continue in the Church to the end of the World. 2. That such as Administer the Word and Sacraments, ought to be duely called and ordained thereunto. 3. That some Ecclesiasticall censures are proper and peculiar to be inflicted onely upon such as bear Office in the Kirk; Other censures are common and may bee inflicted both on

* Not that they are to be heer Printed, but because they being to bee Printed severally, this Act is to bee prefixed to them.

Ministers and other Members of the Kirk. 4. That the censure of suspension from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, inflicted because of grosse ignorance, or because of a scandalous life and conversation; As likewise, the censure of Excommunication or casting out of the Kirk flagitious or contumacious offenders, both the one censure and the other is warrantable by and grounded upon the Word of God, and is necessary (in respect of divine institution) to be in the Kirk. 5. That as the Rights, Power, and Authority of the Civill Magistrate are to bee maintained according to the Word of God, and the Confessions of the Faith of the Reformed Kirks; So it is no lesse true and certaine, that Jesus Christ, the onely Head and onely King of the Kirk, hath instituted and appointed a Kirk Government distinct from the Civill Governmenr or Magistracie. 6. That the Ecclesiasticall Government is committed and intrusted by Christ to the Assemblies of the Kirk, made up of the Ministers of the Word and Ruling Elders. 7. That the lesser and inferiour Ecclesiasticall Assemblies, ought to bee subordinate and subject unto the greater and superiour Assemblies. 8. That notwithstanding hereof, the Civill Magistrate may and ought to suppresse by corporall or Civill punishments, such as by spreading Errour or Heresie, or by fomenting Schisme, greatly dishonour God, dangerously hurt Religion and disturbe the Peace of the Kirk. Which Heads of Doctrine (howsoever opposed by the authors and fomenters of the foresaid errours respectively) the Generall Assembly doth firmely beleeve, own, maintaine, and commend unto others, as Solide, True, Orthodoxe, grounded upon the Word of God, consonant to the judgement both of the ancient and the best Reformed Kirks. And because this Assembly (through the multitude of other necessary and pressing busines) cannot now have so much leisure, as to examine and consider particularly the foresaid CXI. Propositions; Therefore, a more particular examination thereof is committed and referred to the Theologicall faculties in the four Universities of this Kingdome, and the judgement of each of these faculties concerning the same, is appointed to bee reported to the next Generall Assembly. In the meane while, these Propositions shall bee Printed, both that Copies thereof may bee sent to Presbyteries, and that it may be free for any that pleaseth to peruse them, and to make known or send their judgement concerning the same to the said next Assembly.

*Desires*

## *Desires and Overtures presented from Presbyteries and Synods, with the Assemblies answer thereunto.*

IT is humbly presented to the Assembly, that the children of many of the ordinary beggars want baptisme, Themselves also living in great vilenesse, and therefore desire that some remedie may be provided for these abuses.

*The Assembly doth seriously recommend to Presbyteries to consider of the best remedies, and to report their opinions to the next Assembly.*

That all Students of Philosophie at their entry and at their Lawreation, bee holden to subscribe the League and Covenant and be urged thereto, and all other Persons as they come to age and discretion before their first receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

*The Assembly approves this Overture.*

Whereas divers Ministers want Manses and Glebs, and others have their Gleeb so divided in parcells, or lying so farre from their Charge as the Ministers are thereby much prejudged: We desire that this Generall Assembly will recommend it to bee helped by the Parliament, or Committee for planting of Kirks, in the best manner that their Lordships can advise.

Whereas divers Kirks were incommodiously united in corrupt times, we desire that the same be now dismembered and adjoyned to other Kirks, or erected in Kirks by themselves alone, and when the present incumbents agrees thereto, wee desire the same to bee recommended to the Parliament and Committee for plantation of Kirks; Provided alwayes, that the present Ministers who have laboured and indured the heat of day, may enjoy the benefit of such parcells as are taken from them during their life.

*The Assembly doth approve these two Articles, and Recommends to the Commissioners for publike Affaires, to assist any interessed in the particulars for prosecuting the same before the Honourable Estates of Parliament, or the Commission appointed by them for plantation of Kirks.*

THe Generall Assembly, Doe yet againe recommend to Presbyteries and Provinciall Assemblies, to consider all matters formerly referred unto them by preceding Assemblies, and desires that their opinions concerning the same, be reported in writ to the next Generall Assembly.

IT *is this day appointed, that the next Generall Assembly shall meet at* Edinburgh *the second Wednesday of July* 1648.

*A. Ker.*

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